

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-05 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8835

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 255

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINR, PGOV, MR

SUBJECT: CABINET CHANGES IN MAURITANIA

REF: (A) NOUAKCHOTT 140, (B) NOUAKCHOTT 1768 77 (NOTAL),
(C) NOUAKCHOTT 254

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH FOLLOWED UP ON HIS TOUGH KEYNOTE SPEECH AT THE JANUARY 25 THIRD EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY (REFTELA) WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON JANUARY 26 OF CABINET CHANGES AND A RESTRUCTURING OF BOTH GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL PARTY. NUMBER OF MINISTERS REDUCED FROM 17 TO 13 AND THE DESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF STATE ELIMINATED. FATE OF FOUR MINISTERS DROPPED FROM CABINET NOT YET DIVULGED. TWO MINISTERS RETAINED THEIR FORMER PORTFOLIOS, FOUR GAINED ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE THE REMAINING SEVEN
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WERE RESHUFFLED. NO NEW FACES. THE POWERFUL NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU WAS INCREASED FROM 8 TO A NEW TOTAL OF AT LEAST 21 MEMBERS OF WHICH
16 ARE ELECTED WHILE THE OTHERS ARE
"MEMBERS DE DROIT".

2. RESTRUCTURED MINISTRY LIST FOLLOWS: (FORMER TITLE OF MINISTER

IS IN PARENTHESIS FOLOWING NAME).

MINISTRY FOR NATIONAL PERMANENCY (PERMANENCE NATIONALE) AND
PARTY ORGANIZATION-ABDALLAHI OULD BOYE (FORMER MINISTER
FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS AND PARTY SECRETARIAT)
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - HAMDI OULD MOUKNASS (NO CHANGE)
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE-MOHAMMEDEN OULD BABAH (FORMER
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND TRANSPORT)
MINISTRY OF ISLAMIC AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE -MOUJTABA OULD MOHAMED
FALL (FORMER MINISTER OF INTERIOR)
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR - SAKHO MAMADOU (FORMER MINISTER OF
PUBLIC SERVICE AND LABOR)
MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINES - BARO ABDOULAYE (FORMER
MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE - BA IBRAHIMA (FORMER MINIS-
TER OF FINANCE)
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, FISHING AND MERCHANT MARINE - ABDALLAHI
OULD ISMAEL (FORMERLY MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND
MERCHANT MARINE)
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT -SIDI OULD CHEIKH ABDALLAHI
(FORMER MINISTER OF PLANNING AND MINES)
MINISTRY OF EQUIPMENT AND TRANSPORT - AHMED OULD MOHAMED
SALAH (FORMER MINISTER OF EQUIPMENT)
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION - AHMED OULD SIDI BABA (NO
CHANGE)
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MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM, LABOR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS - DIOP MAMADOU AMADOU (FORMER MINISTER OF PRIMARY
EDUCATION)
MINISTER OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION - SIDI AHMED OULD DEYE
(FORMER MINISTER OF CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS)

3. THE FOLLOWING MINISTERS WERE DROPPED FROM CABINET:
CHEIKH SAAD BOUK KANE - (FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE)
COL. M'BARECK OULD BOUNA MOKHTAR - (FORMER MINISTER OF
NATIONAL DEFENSE)
DR. MOULAYE ABDEL MOUMINE -(FORMER MINISTER OF HEALTH AND
SOCIAL AFFAIRS)
MOHAMED EL HAFED OULD ENAHOU - (FORMER MINISTER OF INFORMA-
TION). END UNCLASSIFIED

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE CHANGES WILL BECOME
CLEARER WHEN THE DETAILS OF THE PRESIDENT'S NEW ECONOMIC POLICY
ARE ANNOUNCED. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT A NEW LIBERALIZED INVESTMENT
CODE, HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED. THE ADDITION OF THE COMMERCE PORT-
FOLIO TO FINANCE MINISTER BA IBRAHIMA'S RESPONSIBILITIES SIGNALS AN
ENHANCEMENT OF HIS STATUS AND INFLUENCE. (FYI TWO WEEKS AGO
THE SPECULATION HERE WAS THAT HE WOULD BE SACKED). ABDALLAHI OULD

BOYE WHO EXCHANGED HIS FORMER ISLAMIC AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO FOR A
ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN GOVERNMENT/PARTY AFFAIRS INCLUDING
SHARING SOME OF THE AUTHORITY FORMERLY RESERVED FOR THE PRESIDENT,
REMAINS NUMBER ONE IN THE OFFICIAL LISTING WHICH PRESUMABLY INDICATES
PRECEDENCE. FONMIN MOUKNASS RETAINED HIS PORTFOLIO BUT MOVED UPWARDS
FROM
NUMBER SIX TO NUMBER TWO ON THE LIST. THE CONTROVERSIAL OLD WAR HORSE
AHMED OULD MOHAMED SALAH WAS GIVEN THE TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO IN
ADDITION TO HIS CATCH-ALL "EQUIPEMENT" PORTFOLIO. THIS IS
LOOKED UPON AS ANOTHER VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM THE TOP. THE
CIVILIANIZATION OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY WAS ANTICIPATED.
WHETHER OR NOT THE FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE COLONEL
M'BARECK WILL RETAIN HIS OTHER POSITION, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF,
HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE PUBLIC. THE OTHER THREE DEPOSED
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MINISTERS WERE CONSIDERED LIGHTWEIGHTS.

5. IN AN OBVIOUS MOVE TO DECENTRALIZE AND DEMOCRATIZE THE
POWER OF THE NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU (WHICH UNTIL NOW COM-
PRISED THE PRESIDENT'S CLOSEST ADVISORS), OULD DADDAH ADDED
EIGHT NEW ELECTED MEMBERS AND AT LEAST 5 NON-ELECTED MEMBERS
REPRESENTING SUCH ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY AS THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
YOUTH, WOMEN AND LABOR. INFORMED SOURCES STATE THAT THE
ECONOMIC CHANGES WILL REVERSE THE STATE OWNERSHIP TRENDS THAT
BEGAN IN 1972 AND ENCOURAGE FOREIGN PRIVATE
INVESTMENT TO SHORE UP MAURITANIA'S BATTERED ECONOMY.

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